

ADDING PROFESSIONAL VALUE TO A GRASSROOTS NETWORK

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Alumni Engagement: Opportunities and Challenge

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AGENDA

- 1. The Grassroots Network
- 2. Establishing USJETAA
- 3. Why Professionalize the Network?
- 4. Key Questions
 - 1. Who Are Your Members?
 - 2. How Do You Provide Value?
 - 3. How Do You Find Your Members?





THE GRASSROOTS NETWORK

- Japan Exchange and Teaching Program
 - Run by government of Japan
 - 30+ years
- 36,000+ JET alumni in the United States
 - Ages: mid-20s to mid-50s
 - Various paths after JET
- 19 JET Alumni Association Chapters in United States
 - Volunteer run
 - Various sizes (100 members to 2,000 members)
 - History varies (5 years old to 30 years old)
 - Minimally funded





ESTABLISHING USJETAA

- Recommendation from CULCON
- Tried to work within the existing structure
 - Volunteers at capacity
 - No unified vision
 - No central organization mobilize the network
 - Identified the need for umbrella organization
- Sought input from the network
 - What do they need?
 - What are their struggles?
 - What is missing?

- Founded USJETAA in 2015
- Role of USJETAA
 - Supports the chapter leaders
 - Training & guidance
 - Content creation & dissemination
 - Institutional knowledge & information
 - Supports individual alumni
 - Career & professional development
 - Virtual content
 - Connection to U.S.-Japan community
 - Promotes U.S.-Japan relations
 - Through our own activities and the above



WHY PROFESSIONALIZE THE NETWORK?

- To achieve your organization's goals/mission
 - JET alumni can play a powerful role in U.S.-Japan relations
 - We want to strengthen the capacity of the network
- To increase impact of the network
 - Strengthen affiliation
 - Keep them affiliated over time
 - Promote and recruit
 - Increase the number of high quality JET Program applicants
 - Grassroots/volunteer networks face issues
 - High turnover; loss of institutional knowledge
 - Low budget; lack of fundraising ability
 - Difficult to serve the varied needs of their members
 - Lack of "know how" or just struggling to keep the lights on





KEY QUESTIONS: WHO ARE YOUR MEMBERS?

- To professionalize an existing network or create a new one you need to know about your target members
- Key Questions
 - How old are they?
 - Different age groups want different things
 - What do they have in common other than your program?
 - Where are they located?
 - Regional, national, or international?
 - Is there an existing network?
 - Are groups already formed?
 - What do they want?
 - What are their needs?





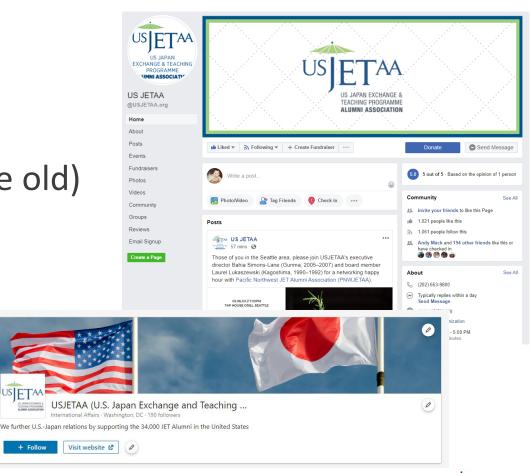
KEY QUESTIONS: HOW DO YOU PROVIDE VALUE?

- If you don't provide value, alumni will not connect or stay connected
- Can't just serve your own organizational needs/mission
- Key Questions
 - Why should your alumni affiliate?
 - Why should your alumni stay connected?
 - Why should your alumni reconnect?
 - Are you meeting their needs or wants?
 - How does your mission connect with the alumni's needs?



KEY QUESTIONS: HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR MEMBERS?

- Take stock of what you already have:
 - Lists of names
 - Records with emails addresses (may be old)
 - Social media accounts and groups
- Ways to find them:
 - Existing network and word of mouth
 - Your social media accounts
 - LinkedIn



CONTACT ME!

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